India's export to Dollar dominated countries

482. SHRI N.K. SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the percentage of India's export catering to Dollar dominated countries; and

(b) the steps being taken by Government for diversification of export destinations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) As per the information furnished by Reserve Bank of India, the percentage of India's exports catering to Dollar dominated countries was 87.6 per cent for the period April 1, 2007 to 31st March, 2008.

(b) India's foreign trade strategy is broadly based on focus-product and focus-country approach, thereby to promote 'Brand India' abroad. In order to diversify destinations of Indian exports, the Government has initiated various region specific integrated programmes like "Focus-LAC (Latin American and Caribbean Countries)", "Focus-AFRICA", "Focus-CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States)" etc. besides setting up of joint forum on trade and investment for increasing bilateral trade, Joint Commissions on trade, working out Comprehensive Economic Co-operation Agreement (CECA), Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), Regional Free trade Agreement and Preferential Trade Agreement under SAFTA (South Asian Free Trade Area) for SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation) countries. In order to boost exports and to provide an environment conducive to trade, apart from government to government discussions, the government encourages business to business cooperation and participation of Indian exporters in international exhibitions and fairs. Economic diplomacy has equally been emphasized along with political diplomacy. This has resulted in exploration and improvement in exports to new and potential dynamic markets.

Doha round of trade negotiations

483. SHRI N.K. SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) by when Government expects the conclusion of the Doha round of trade negotiations;

(b) the critical issues that still remain unresolved and on which negotiations are held up; and

(c) whether there is any possibility of these issues being resolved in the near future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (c) A mini-Ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), attended by about 30 Trade Ministers, was held in Geneva in July, 2008. The objective of the meeting was to finalise modalities for Agriculture and Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA). Simultaneously, a meeting on Services ("Signalling" conference) was also held. The mini-Ministerial meeting, however, ended without an agreement on any issue.

Some of the issues which either could not be discussed at all during the mini-Ministerial meeting or on which agreement could not be reached were Cotton subsidies, Tariff capping, Tariff simplification, new Tariff Rate Quota creation etc. in agriculture and sectoral initiatives in NAMA. Developing countries also have concerns in other areas of the Doha Round negotiations such as fisheries subsidies, Anti-dumping, Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) and its relationship with the convention on bio-diversity, liberalisation of trade in environmental goods and services etc.

The multilateral process of discussions has since resumed at the WTO on agriculture and NAMA issues and efforts are on to resolve the outstanding issues so as to achieve a balanced, positive and development-oriented outcome to the Doha Round at the earliest. The Round can only be completed when WTO Members agree on the modalities for Agriculture and NAMA and complete negotiations in all the areas covered under the Doha Work Programme.

India's contribution to Intellectual Property Rights

484. SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether as per the recent figures of United Nations Indian patent registry reveal that more than 90,000 applications are received relating to patentable inventions every year;

(b) if so, whether the global campaign to undermine Intellectual Property Rights by vested interests on the plea that Intellectual Property Rights increase the cost of medicines for the world's poor; and

(c) if so, India's support and contribution towards strengthening Intellectual Property Rights?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND PROMOTION, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) The number of patent applications filed in the Indian patent office in the financial year 2007-2008 is 35,218. Therefore, the information that 90,000 applications are received is factually not correct.

(b) and (c) The intellectual property rights policy in India seeks to balance and calibrate intellectual property protection with public health, national security and public interest concerns. In order to strengthen the intellectual property system in the country, the Government has taken the following initiatives:

(i) A scheme of Modernisation of Intellectual Property offices at a cost of Rs. 153.00 crore was implemented during the ninth and tenth Five Year Plans for infrastructure development, computerization, human resource development and training and awareness.

(ii) Four new integrated Intellectual Property Offices were set up in Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai and Mumbai.

(iii) Work for the setting of the National Institute of Intellectual Property Management at Nagpur has commenced.